



MITCHELL E. DANIELS, Jr., Governor
STATE OF INDIANA

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY JOSEPH E. WAINSCOTT, JR., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Indiana Department of Homeland Security
Indiana Government Center South
302 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-232-3980*

For Immediate Release

State disaster assistance centers to open Thursday

INDIANAPOLIS (September 24, 2008) -- Governor Mitch Daniels announced today that the state will partner with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Red Cross to open three one-stop disaster assistance centers in Lake County beginning Thursday to help residents of Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties impacted by severe weather caused by Hurricane Ike.

The state and FEMA will also open a site in LaPorte County and one in Porter County. Exact locations will be announced by Friday.

The governor was notified Tuesday that President George W. Bush declared that a major disaster exists for the three counties and approved federal individual assistance for affected residents.

Andy Miller, director of Indiana's Office of Disaster Recovery said the state assistance centers in Lake County will be open beginning tomorrow (Thursday) from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time through at least Tuesday, September 30, 2008. The centers will be closed on Sunday.

All centers will have representatives from FEMA, and computers and phones will be available for flood victims to complete (FEMA) applications. It is not necessary to come to a disaster center to fill out a FEMA application. In fact, residents and business owners who sustained losses in the three counties can register online at

<http://www.fema.gov/assistance>

<<https://exchweb.in.gov/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.fema.gov/assistance>> or call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers operate from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. local time.

FEMA assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

The Red Cross also will be at the assistance centers to deliver basic necessities such as water and clean-up kits. State agencies, including the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV), Indiana State Department of

Health, Indiana Department of Insurance, Indiana Department of Homeland Security, Department of Workforce Development and others, will have representatives on site to provide immediate assistance and answer questions for those who have suffered a loss.

The locations, beginning Thursday, are:

Former Maruszczak Appliance store
9450 Calumet Avenue
Munster

VFW
2750 Central Ave
Lake Station

Ivy Tech Community College
1440 East 35th Avenue
Gary

Flood victims from all three counties may visit any of the sites. In addition, FSSA offices in Porter and LaPorte counties will have computers available for individuals to use to apply for FEMA assistance. A list of locations for those offices and centers may be found at this link: <http://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/3674.htm>

The governor also has asked the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to allow emergency food stamp distribution for victims in the three counties. Once approval has been received, the disaster food stamps will be available at the Lake Station and Munster flood assistance locations. In Gary, food stamp distribution will take place at the Gary Career Center, 1800 East 35th Avenue. Food stamps will not be distributed at the disaster center at Ivy Tech Community College. Disaster food stamps are for citizens impacted by the recent flooding. Individuals will be required to show identification and sign an affidavit indicating they have suffered damage from the flooding.

More information about distribution of food stamps will be provided as soon as approval has been given.

In addition to FEMA and the American Red Cross, the following state services also will be available at these disaster recovery centers:

Housing Support: listing of emergency shelters, listing of temporary housing, rental assistance will be provided by FEMA.

Social Services: emergency food stamps; applications for TANF, food stamps, Medicaid and child care; listing of available child care providers; mental health services

Unemployment Insurance: apply for Disaster Unemployment Insurance or state unemployment benefits

Insurance Information: interpretation of insurance policies by staff of the Indiana Department of Insurance; information on lost or damaged policies; information on obtaining copies of insurance policies; general insurance navigation advice and complaint resolution; car insurance assistance.

Public Health Information: clean up advice and education including mold removal and prevention; vaccination information, including tetanus shots; information regarding free well water testing; access and information to vital records - birth and death certificates

Transportation Assistance: information on replacement of driver licenses and identification cards (when BMV employees are able to make a visual match with the photograph on file, the individual must only verbally verify name, date of birth, social security number and address. Other requirements for supporting documentation will be waived. The normal replacement fee of \$10 for a duplicate credential also will be waived); assistance with vehicle title replacement or apply for a salvage vehicle title via the BMV; car insurance assistance from agents of major private insurance providers

Daniels sent a letter to the President September 20 to formally request federal individual assistance for Hoosiers in Lake, LaPorte and Porter counties. He also said that he would reserve the right to request the public assistance program and may request assistance for other counties that received severe damage from the remnants of Hurricane Ike, including Clark, Crawford, Dearborn, Floyd, Jasper, Jefferson, Jennings, Harrison, Martin, Newton, Perry, Scott, Spencer and Switzerland.

Joint disaster assessment teams have been working there to finalize damage estimates. Hoosiers in southern Indiana may continue to report damage from the storm via electronic form on the IDHS website (www.in.gov/dhs <<https://exchweb.in.gov/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.in.gov/dhs>>) or a toll-free number (888-335-9490). Several hundred people from southern Indiana have reported wind damage. The call center is staffed from 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. EDT daily by the Indiana Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives.

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Media contact: John Erickson, IDHS, 317/232-4214, jerickson@dhs.in.gov

Media contact: Jane Jankowski, Office of the Governor, 317/232-1622, jjankowski@gov.in.gov